

Fishing – Cooper lands Sonik double-whammy

David Cooper (pictured) had a 33rd birthday to remember as he hooked two major prizes in one of the biggest sea angling competitions on Britain's East Coast.

The self-employed painter and decorator landed the heaviest fish in difficult conditions during the popular event which attracted over 440 anglers and cost £12 to enter.

And the tradesman from Edinburgh's Bingham area and was third in the overall bag in the four-hour, 42nd Sonik Amble Open Shore competition which carried a prize fund of £6,000 and was fished with winds gusting to 50mph.

His big fish, a 6lb 14oz cod, was hooked with his second cast and earned him a cheque for £250.

His only other fish in a bag of just over 9lbs 10oz, was trapped on his second last cast. He had the third pick of the table of sponsors products and selected a Sonik Gravity Surf Rod X5 valued at £300.

In fact, the sea became so rough last Sunday that David and his friend, Dunbar-based Chris Empson, who were fishing from rocks, were just about to pack up when the fish took the bait.

Ironically, Chris won the North Berwick Rover event hosted by the Bass Rock Sea Angling League last Wednesday, landing five cod for a bag of 11lb 10oz.

It was the league's first competition of 2019 and David failed

to land a fish even through he was only yards from Chris.

On Sunday, anglers were allowed to select their spot between Seahouses and Lynemouth pipe.

Chris picked the spot where they fished in the Amble-based event after the friends walked a mile along the coastline to a spot called the Doctor's House.

But Chris failed to hook a fish and David said: "It's not a part of the coastline that I know much about having only fished in Northumberland once before.

"Chris and I travelled down together and we talked to locals and they said the Doctor's House area had been good lately.

"We walked along the shore towards the Doctor's House but there were anglers everywhere.

"Chris, however, spotted this area on the rocks and there was room for both of us. I tackled up and hooked the big cod with my second cast after about five minutes of fishing. I caught the cod on a pannel rigg with lugworm bait.

"There was an eight to ten-foot swell and we played safe staying back from the edge of the rocks.

"I also tried mussels and crab baits during the day but had to wait until my second last cast to hook the second cod."

He added: "I've thanked Chris for picking the spot and it's disappointing that he didn't catch anything as we were side by side, but when it is your turn it is your turn.

"Chris won the North Berwick Rover last week and I blanked yet I was only yards from him. That's the way fishing goes.

"Sunday was an unbelievable day as I've only ever won club competitions before but this is one of the biggest and we were advised to give it a go."

A total of 13 members of the Bass Rock Sea Angling League competed and several members were among the prize winners. Barry McEwan from Port Seton and Alan Brown from West Barns plus Craig Ogilvie from North Berwick were also among the prizes at Amble.

And Craig's niece Ellie Swinburne, aged 12 from Haddington, was presented with a rig wallet with Maltesers and other sweeties in it.